

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 101339Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1235

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 114

E.O. 11652: N/

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: LOYALIST MINI-CONVENTION IS BUST

REF: BELFAST 106

1. ANY THREAT POSED BY SOME MEMBERS UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) TO HOLD SESSION CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DESPITE ITS DISSOLUTION (REFTEL) FIZZLED MARCH 10 WHEN ONLY SIXTEEN UUUC EX-CONVENTION MEMBERS (LESS THAN HALF) ATTENDED MEETING HELD IN EAST BELFAST (NOT AT STORMONT) - MARCH 9. ERNEST BAIRD ONLY PROMINENT UNIONIST CONTINUING ADVOCATE ACTIVE OPPOSITION TO DIRECT RULE. OFFICIAL UNIONIST AND UUUC LEADER HARRY WEST SAID THAT UNIONISTS "GOING ALONG WITH DIRECT RULE" UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. REVEREND IAN PAISLEY KEEPING QUIET. SOME LOYALIST LOCAL COUNCILLORS ATTENDED MEETING MARCH 9 FEEDING SPECULATION THAT LOYALISTS CONTEMPLATING BOYCOTT OF MEETINGS LOCAL COUNCILS TO PROTEST REJECTION BY HMG OF CONVENTION REPORT. CONGEN SEEMS NO ADVANTAGE TO LOYALISTS IN THIS TACTIC.

2. IN RARE DISPLAY OF ANGER MARCH 9 SECRETARY OF STATE

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REES HIT BACK AT BAIRD FOR CRITICIZING ARMY FOR INEFFECTUALITY.

REES SAID HE WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT CONVINCING HIS CONSTITUENTS
WITH RELATIVES SERVING IN ULSTER THAT BAIRD REPRESENTED DECENT
PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. BAIRD DIRECT CRITICISM OF ARMY IS
DEPARTURE FROM CONSISTENT LOYALIST CHARGES THAT ARMY HANDCUFFED
BY GOVERNMENT POLICIES. CURRENT APATHY IN PROVINCE ABOUT
CONTINUED DIRECT RULE COULD CHANGE QUICKLY TO ACTIVE HOSTILITY
HOWEVER IF SECURITY FORCES SEEM IRRESOLUTE IN COUNTERING
TERRORISM.
SPICER

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NNN

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